

SEVERAL
SPEECHES

Against the BILL for Repealing

The Triennial ACT:

As they were Spoken in the

HOUSE of COMMONS,

The 24th Day of April, 1716.

Together with the

REASONS given by the LORDS

Who Protested against the said BILL.

L O N D O N:

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Mr. Speaker,

I Am very sensible under what *Disadvantage* I must speak after so long a *Debate*: I will therefore endeavour to *contract* what occurs to me on this *Subject*, and to avoid repeating what has been said before by other *Gentlemen*. And in what I have to offer, I shall observe this *Method*; I will first consider the *Arguments* that have been used for this *Bill*, and then give my *Reasons* why I am against it.

The *Arguments* for the *Bill* are, I think, chiefly these:

The *Expences* in *Elections*.

The *Animosities* and *Divisions* made and continued by *Triennial Elections*.

The *Advantages* our *Enemies* may take of these *Animosities* and *Divisions*: And

The *Encouragement* (I think no *Gentleman* has spoke plainer) that this *Bill* will give to our *Allies* to treat with us, and to enter into proper *Alliances* for our mutual *Benefit* and *Advantage*.

As to the *Expences* in *Elections*, it must be acknowledged that they are grown very scandalous, as well as grievous and burthensome to the *Gentlemen* of *England*. They have encreased upon them, not from the *Contests* of neighbouring *Gentlemen* with one another, but from *Strangers* (by what *Influence* or *Direction* I cannot tell) coming to their *Boroughs*, who have no natural *Interest* to recommend them, nothing but *Bribery* and *Corruption*, which has put *Gentlemen* under the *Necessity* of great *Expences* to preserve their *Interests*, and to serve their *Country*. And you must give me Leave to add, that another Cause has been, the *Impunity*, *Bribery* and *Corruption* have met with in this *House*, when they have been very notorious, and very fully detected. But, I fear, this *Bill* can be no *Cure* to that *Evil*, it will rather encrease it; for as the *Term* of the Continuance of a *Parliament* is prolonged, so the *Expences* will encrease with it. An *Annuity* for *Seven Years* deserves a better Consideration than for *Three*; and those that will give *Money* to get into *Parliament*, will give more for *Seven* than for *Three Years*. Nothing will so effectually prevent *Expences*, as *Annual Parliaments*: That was our ancient *Constitution*, and every *Departing* from it is usually attended with great *Inconveniences*.

As for our *Animosities* and *Divisions*, I am sorry there are any, but cannot believe this *Bill* will be a *Remedy* for them. The *Animosities* and *Divisions* raised by *Elections* are of a *private Nature*, and little affect the *Publick*; those that do are otherwise to be accounted for, which might have been extinguished; but the *Opportunities* have been neglected, and I wish some *Persons* have not studied rather to continue and encrease them, than to extinguish them. I will speak plainly on this *Occasion*, I think the greatest *Animosities* and *Divisions*, the greatest *Discontents* and *Uneasinesses* now among us have been owing to the *unreasonable Resentments*, *Avarice* and *Ambition* of some, and to the *unaccountable Folly* and *Madness* of others.

That our *Enemies* will take *Advantage* of our *Divisions* is not to be doubted, if it is in their *Power*; but I must observe, that since the *Triennial Act* passed there have been *Ten* several *Parliaments* called, most of them when you were actually in *War*, your *Animosities* and *Divisions* great, and your *Enemies* vigilant; yet no *Inconveniences* followed, nor were any, as I have heard of, so much as attempted at the *Times* of those *Elections*.

The last of the Arguments I have recited, is the *Encouragement this will give to your Allies to enter into Treaties with you*. No one says they *want* this Encouragement, no one says they *ask* it; so that I may conclude, this is only a *Pretence*. I should be sorry we had such Allies, as would not treat with his Majesty without our *giving up our Constitution*: Should the like be ask'd of them, they would certainly entertain such a Proposition with the Contempt and Indignation it deserved. But what you are now going to do, instead of *strengthening the King's Hands*, will, I am persuaded, *lessen Him in the Opinion of his Allies*; for this is proclaiming to the World, that he *dares not call a new Parliament*; that *He dares not trust the People in a new Choice*. Besides, not daring to call a new Parliament carries along with it a Supposition to the Dishonour of this House; for it supposes, that another House of Commons would act differently from the present, which is to confess, that this *House does not truly represent the People*, that they and their Representatives are of *different Minds*, and that if they were to choose again, they would choose Men of other Principles, of other Sentiments.

I will not trouble you farther with Answers to the Arguments for this Bill; those against it that weigh most with me are these: That frequent new Parliaments are our Constitution; That a long Parliament is plainly destructive of the Subjects just Right, and many ways inconsistent with the Good of the Nation. Is it reasonable any particular Men should for a long time engross so great a Trust exclusive of others? Can it be of Advantage to the Publick, that the Counties, Cities and Boroughs, should be long confined to those they have once chosen, their Interests admitting of great Variation in length of Time?

Frequent new Parliaments are our Constitution, and the Calling and Holding of them was for many Ages the Practice. Before the Conquest Parliaments were held Three times every Year, at *Christmas, Easter, and Whitsontide*. In *Edward the Third's Time* it was enacted, *That Parliaments should be holden every Year once, or oftner if need be*. This must be understood of new Parliaments, for Prorogations and long Adjournments were not then known; they were never heard of till later Years. They began in *Henry the Eighth's Time*, that Prince and his Ministers knowing long Parliaments were best fitted to make great Changes. They were therefore Inventions when extraordinary Things were to be done, when what was then the Church was to be alter'd, and the Church-Lands to be taken away. There is nothing of this sort now, I hope, intended. From that Time our *Historians tell us*, that whenever the same Parliaments were long continued, or the Meetings of Parliaments long discontinued, they gave great Uneasiness. In the unfortunate Reign of King *Charles the First*, there had been an Intermission of Parliaments Twelve Years, which produced an Act in the Sixteenth Year of that King, *For the preventing the Inconveniences happening by long Intermission of Parliaments*. That Act, in the Preamble, recites the Law made in the Reign of *Edward the Third*, That Parliaments ought to be held every Year once; but that the Appointment of Time and Place belonged to His Majesty and his Royal Progenitors: And that it had been found by Experience, great Inconveniences and Mischiefs had happened to the King, and to the Commonwealth, by not holding Parliaments accordingly; and for Prevention of the like for the future, it enacts, *That the said Laws shall be strictly observed; and that in case there be an Intermission of the Sitting of Parliament for Three Years together, if there is a Parliament in being, that Parliaments shall be dissolved; and very extravagant Powers were given for the Calling and Assembling of another; and every such Parliament was not to be dissolv'd of Fifty Days without their own Consent*. This extraordinary Step was soon follow'd by another, an Act, *That the Parliament should not be dissolved, prorogued, or adjourn'd, but by Act of Parliament; nor the House of Parliament adjourn'd but by themselves respectively*. I need not be particular in recounting the Consequences of this Act of Parliament; for every one knows, that Set of Men, when they had thus continued themselves, never stopp'd till they had murder'd the best of Princes, and entirely subverted our Constitution both in Church and State.

Soon after the Restoration of King *Charles the Second*, the Act for the preventing the Inconveniences happening by the long Intermission of Parliaments was repealed, because derogatory to the Prerogative, and because it might be an Occasion of many Mischiefs and Inconveniences, and endanger the Publick Peace and Safety; but at the same time it is declared and enacted, *That because, by the ancient Laws and Statutes Parliaments are to be held very often, the Sitting and Holding of Parliaments shall not be intermitted above Three Years at the most*. This Law not having been so well observed as it ought to have been at the Revolution in the Convention Parliament, when it was thought

thought necessary to declare the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, after many Breaches had been made upon them, it was among other things declared, *That Parliaments ought to be held frequently*; and what follows in that Act is very strong, for it declares and enacts, *That all and singular the Rights and Liberties asserted and claimed in the said Declaration, are the Indubitable Rights and Liberties of the People of this Kingdom, and so shall be esteemed, allowed, adjudged, and taken to be; and all the Particulars thereof, shall be firmly and strictly holden and observed, as they are expressed in the said Declaration.* The Right claimed and asserted, is, *That Parliaments ought to be held frequently*; and soon after a new Parliament was called, which sat annually: But this was not looked upon to be a complying with the Right claimed, and therefore after that Parliament had sat Three Times, in the Fourth Session, it was thought necessary to come to a farther Explication, and a Bill passed both Houses, but was rejected by the Throne, *for the frequent Meeting and Calling of Parliaments.* Others were attempted in the next Session, and it is well known how they came to miscarry in this House; but in the succeeding Session, a Bill passed both Houses, and had the Royal Assent. That is the Act this Bill is to alter: But before it is altered, I hope it will be shewn, that what is asserted in the Preamble, is mistaken, and has proved otherwise. In the Preamble Two Things are asserted, *That by the ancient Laws and Statutes of the Kingdom, frequent Parliaments ought to be held; and that frequent new Parliaments tend very much to the happy Union and good Agreement of the King and his People.* The first Proposition is incontestible; and the latter, I think, will not be denied: For frequent and new Parliaments create a Confidence between the King and his People, a very necessary Step towards an Union and good Agreement. If the King would be acquainted with the People, and have more the Hearts of them, this is the surest way; and I am persuaded this House will never consent to any thing that may prevent the one, and intercept the other.

I cannot entertain so unworthy a Thought of this House, that any Gentleman in it, would at this time in direct Terms be for perpetuating themselves; yet if they consent to this Bill, I shall reckon they are doing it; for tho' it only prolongs this Parliament for Seven Years, I cannot doubt, but hereafter there will be another for continuing it longer; because before the end of this Term, the Reasons will probably be stronger for it, than they are now: Neither can I imagine, that Gentlemen are afraid to trust the Peoples Choice again; do they think that the great and memorable Things this Parliament has done for the Service and Benefit of their Country, will make them less acceptable to the People? No one will say so; and then I see no Reason why they should be for making this Alteration in our Laws and Constitution, which will certainly have a very ill Effect upon the Minds of the People: For they will be ready to say, and with Reason, that after the expiration of Three Years, you are no longer their Representatives, because they chose you to serve them no longer. With great Submission I speak it, in my poor Opinion, K—, L—s and C—s, can no more continue a Parliament beyond its natural Duration, than they can make a Parliament. I know at extraordinary junctures, Conventions have been turned into Parliaments, but it has been thought adviseable soon to determine them, and to pass Acts in the subsequent Legal Parliaments, to confirm what they have done. And I make no doubt, but if this Bill passes into a Law, and this Parliament is continued more than Three Years, there will be an Act in the succeeding Parliament to confirm whatever shall be done after the Three Years. There is an Instance in your Statute Book, where all the Acts of a Parliament were declared void and repeal'd, because the Parliament was unlawfully summoned, and the Members not duly chosen.

I need not urge farther, that the wisest Governments that have preserv'd a Face of Liberty, have never continued those long, with whom they have entrusted the supreme Power. That by this Bill, you will have all the Mischief of a long Parliament, without any the Good of a short one.

And that a Standing Parliament, and a Standing Army are convertible, and only necessary to support one another.

And that there can be no occasion for this Bill at this time, because this Parliament may have two more Sessions, if the King pleases.

But I have already taken up so much of your Time, I shall only add, That for the Reasons I have given, I am against committing this Bill.

Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Speaker,

WE are told there is an *absolute Necessity* for the Bill which is now before you, and that those who oppose it, are no better than Friends to a *Popish Pretender*. But as I wish as well to his present Majesty's Person and Government, as the most *zealous* for his Service, I shall never resign my Opinion to *Words* only, and betray my Trust to serve the *Purposes* of a *Ministry*.

I cannot but think this Bill, if it pass into a Law, will highly infringe the Liberties of the People; and as I can by no means assent to the Reasons that are offered to prove it *necessary*, so I shall heartily give my Negative to it.

I don't wonder to hear a Necessity urged for altering the Constitution of our Parliaments, by those † who have given up their own.

† Offence was taken by some at these Words, which occasioned an Interruption — but the Gentleman proceeded.

The Chief Arguments made use of for it, as it repeals the *Triennial Act*, and continues the present Parliament, are,

To appease the groundless Animosities of the People.

To avoid Expences, which frequent Elections occasion, to the impoverishing of many Gentlemens Families.

To obviate tumultuous Riots and Assemblies, which might give a Handle to a Second Rebellion: And lastly

To further our Alliances abroad.

How we can possibly expect to quiet the groundless Animosities of the People by this Bill, I must own, I am at a Loss to imagine, unless stripping them of their most valuable Privilege, which they and their Ancestors have for many Ages past exercised and enjoyed, may be thought a proper Expedient to reconcile their Affections, and endear the *present Administration* to them.

The Expences at Elections are merely voluntary, and if any one suffers by them he has none to blame but himself, and I scarce believe Gentlemen to be serious in this particular; for let us look but a little backward, and trace this mischievous Evil, this growing Corruption, that needs such an extraordinary Remedy to its Original, and we shall find it has its rise from the same Place whence the Remedy propos'd had its Beginning: And that former ill Ministries, the better to forward their sinister Views, have, by sending their Agents through the Kingdom at an approaching Election, *debauch'd* the People with the *publick Money*, to that pitch of Corruption we are now arrived. 'Tis otherwise impossible to give an Account how so many Gentlemen are chosen to serve in Parliament in Counties and Places, where they have no visible Estates or Interest; nay, some perhaps whose Names were never heard of in the County a Month before the Election.

The Rebellion is happily now at an end, and the Government so much better secured against Riots and tumultuous Assemblies, by the wholesome Laws provided by the Wisdom of this Parliament, that little or no Danger can be reasonably apprehended from thence; especially if we consider the Number of Forces prudently quartered throughout the Kingdom, sufficient to suppress the most daring Commotions that shall be attempted.

The last Reason made use of to prove the Necessity of this Bill, is, that 'twill enable the Government the better to Treat and Negotiate Foreign Alliances.

But surely those who make use of this as an Argument, are Strangers to the Constitution of *England*; for by the known and standing Law of the Land, the Right of making Peace and War, Treaties and Alliances, are undeniably the King's Prerogative; and his Majesty may exercise that Right, as to him seems best, and most for the Good and Benefit of his People, without Application to Parliament, either to approve or confirm. But admitting that of late Years, Parliaments have thought themselves entitled to interpose their Advice in Treaties and Alliances (though I deny it to be their Right) this is an Argument singly sufficient with me to support the *Triennial Bill*. For supposing a Ministry shall at any time Negotiate an Alliance prejudicial to the Interest of *England*, and by their Artifice impose upon a Parliament, to approve and confirm it; is it not a peculiar Happiness, that such a Parliament will quickly have an end? and that the People have it in their Power by another, which must soon be called, to correct the Misdeeds of such a Ministry, and prevent the further ill Consequences of such a Treaty to the Nation?

But

But allowing the Arguments that are made use of sufficient to prove the Necessity of Repealing the Triennial Bill at present, I would beg leave to consider, whether it be in our Power or no, to continue the present Parliament beyond the time for which the People chose us.

And as for my own Part, I freely declare it as my Opinion, (though I shall always acquiesce in the Judgment of the Majority) that the Purport of this Bill, so far as it relates to the Continuance of this present Parliament, is not within the Compass of the Trust repos'd in us, by the People. And to satisfy Gentlemen that I am not singular in this Opinion, I would beg their Patience to read to them a Passage or two from *Mr. Lock's Treatise of Government*.

The Power of the Legislative (says he) being derived from the People by a positive voluntary Grant and Institution, can be no other than what that positive Grant conveyed; which being only to make Laws and not Legislators, the Legislative can have no Power of transferring their Authority of making Laws, and placing it in other Hands.

Again he lays it down as a Rule, *That when the Society has placed the Legislative in any Assembly of Men to continue in them and their Successors, the Legislative can never revert to the People whilst that Government lasts, because having provided a Legislature, with Power to continue for ever, they have given up their Political Power to the Legislative and cannot resume it.*

But if they have set Limits to the duration of their Legislative, and made this Supreme Power in any Person or Assembly only temporary: At the Determination of the Time set, it reverts to the Society, and the People have a Right to place it in new Hands.

I beg Pardon for the Length of the Quotation; but as the Author, in his Life time, was always esteemed a Man of great Learning and Candour, and no ways suspected as disaffected to the Succession in the House of *Hannover*, I could not omit taking notice of the Sentiments of so great a Man, so conducive to a right understanding of the Point now in Question.

And if these Positions are true, the Inferences are very obvious: The People of *England* have a fundamental indisputable Right to appoint their Representatives in Parliament, and by a Law still in Being for Three Years, and no longer (subject to the King's Power of Dissolution) have chosen us their Representatives, in pursuance of that Law; and therefore, whenever that Triennial Term shall expire, have a Right to chose new ones.

It may be objected, That when the People have once constituted the Legislative, that the Legislature is thereby vested with the whole Power of their Electors: And it cannot be denied, but generally speaking it will hold true. And the People of *England* having chosen us to Represent them, we are thereby empower'd, not only to make Laws, but to alter or repeal any Law in Being as we shall think fit, for their Benefit and Security, and they will undoubtedly be bound thereby. But then this is to be understood, where the Subject-Matter of the Laws we make is within the Compass of the Trust which the People have or may at least be supposed to delegate to us; and its an ill Way of Reasoning to assert, that we have a Power to do what we cannot do without Prejudice to those we Represent.

The Right of electing Representatives in Parliament, is inseparably inherent in the People of *Great-Britain*, and can never be thought to be delegated to the Representatives, unless you'll make the Elected to be the Elector; and at the same time, suppose it the Will of the People, that their Representatives should have it in their Power to destroy those that made them, whenever a Ministry shall think it necessary to screen themselves from their just Resentments: This would be to destroy the Fence to all their Freedom, for if we have a Right to continue our selves one Year, one Month, or Day, beyond our Triennial Term, 'twill unavoidably follow, we have it in our Power to make our selves Perpetual; and whatever Necessity we may be reduced to hereafter, Matters are not yet in that apparent bad Condition, to convince the People there's a present occasion for this dangerous Innovation in their Constitution.

To say that the passing this Bill is not to grasp to our selves the Right of Election, but only to enlarge the time for calling new Parliaments, is a manifest Fallacy; for whenever our Three Years are expired, we can no longer be said to subsist by the Choice of the People, but by our own Appointment; and it's a Jest to tell me, *I have a Right to that which another has a Right to take from me.*

Whoever will consider well the Frame and Nature of our Constitution, will find it calculated for every Circumstance needful for the Security of a free People. We are guarded by our Representatives in Parliament, against any Arbitrary Encroachments of the Supreme Executive Power; and by frequent and new Parliaments,

ments, against the Weakness, Folly, and Corruption of our Representatives. And though many Instances may be given of long Intermissions of Parliaments, yet that does by no means prove frequent and new Parliaments not to be part of our Constitution; and its obvious to every impartial Person, that without them our Constitution is defective. For these Reasons I cannot approve of this Bill: I think it an open Violation of the People's Liberties, or to speak most mildly of it, a Breach of our Trust in that part which will most sensibly affect them; and of that ill Tendency in its Consequence, that as nothing but the Security of the Ministry can make it at this time needful, so nothing but a Standing Force can make it lasting.

Mr. Speaker,

I Know my Duty to this House, and the Consequence of *unguarded Expressions* better, than to say, That, by any Bills we have already passed, we have made so wide a Gap in the Constitution, that the Fence of the Laws is in a manner destroyed; or that, by any thing we have done, we have paved the Way to a Despotick and Military Government, the greatest Calamity can befall a free-born People. Such Reflections may come from Persons without Doors, who, tho' they may with Justice complain when their Liberties are invaded, yet they cannot always enter into the Depth and Wisdom of our Councils, and are too apt to censure what they do not understand. No Member can regularly arraign any Bills the same Session they have obtained the Force and Sanction of Laws. But this Bill (tho' it hath already got through the most difficult Part of its Passage, tho' it will in Probability be the next Law that shall be made) is yet unpassed, is yet before us for our Consideration, and we have a Right to treat it with Freedom: Freedom of Speech, I presume, will not only be allow'd, but is expected on this Occasion. I hope therefore, as the Business of this Day hath raised an universal Expectation throughout the Kingdom, so Gentlemen who are more able (none is more willing than my self) will appear with Resolution and Spirit in this important Debate, in this perhaps our last Struggle for the Liberties of those we Represent.

I think, then, all the Arguments which have been used for this Bill are grounded on meer Surmises and Imaginations only, are either trifling in themselves, or dangerous in their Consequence.

One main Reason urged both in the Preamble of the Bill, and in the Debates of Gentlemen who are for it, is this:

That the Disaffections of the People are so great, and the Enemies of the Government both at Home and Abroad so watchful, that new Elections will occasion new Riots, rekindle the Rebellion, and be destructive to the Peace and Security of the Government, which will all be prevented by continuing this GOOD Parliament, and making the Time of its Dissolution uncertain.

If this Argument be apply'd to the Ministry, I can only answer, that it is no Concern of ours, whether they have render'd themselves odious to the People, or not. They are more properly the Object of our Jealousy, than of our Care. They may be destroyed, and the Government subsist. But if it be apply'd to His Majesty, as it must be to make it any Inducement to pass this Bill, I will venture to say, that none of those, who are called Enemies to the Government, and Abettors of the Rebellion, could have offered an Argument so injurious to His Majesty's Honour. For with what Face can any good Subject insinuate, that in the Infancy of his Reign he hath deprived himself of the Love and Affections of a People, who so lately received him with the utmost Expressions of Joy? What an unjust Idea must this give of his most mild and gracious Government? But the Assertion is the more injurious, because it is entirely groundless. For when these pretended Disaffections were at the highest, it appear'd how impotent they were, how far from being universal, by the easy and sudden Suppression of the Rebellion; and by Consequence how absolutely his Majesty reigned in the Hearts of his Subjects. Now the Rebellion is suppressed, if there should be any Remains of those who are ill disposed, the Fate of their Friends (whilst the Terror of it is fresh on their Minds) will restrain them from any future Attempt. Besides, the Hands of the Government are strengthened. The Habeas-Corpus-Act is not only now, but may be again suspended: You have a numerous Standing Army distributed thro' the Kingdom, to controul and awe unruly Spirits. But suppose the Disaffections of the People to be as great, suppose the Faction (spoke of in the Preamble to be as restless and designing,

as

as is affirm'd; Is this the way to extinguish *Animosities*, to heal *Divisions*, and to reconcile *Parties*? No, Sir, it will rather create *Discontents*, where there are none already: It will rather give Occasion to *those* that are *Disaffected* to rail at the *Proceedings*, to say, that your *Actions* are such, that you dare not venture on new *Elections*; and who knows what such *Suggestions* may produce? 'Tis possible when the *Three Years* (for which you are now chosen) shall expire, they may insist, that they are *unrepresented* in *Parliament*; and this will be a better *Handle*, a more plausible *Foundation*, for the *Faction* to work upon, than they could have at the Time of a regular *Election*. Now if the *Continuance* of this *Parliament* be intended only to calm *Mens Minds*, and that it is hoped this *Storm* may by degrees *subside*, Gentlemen will be pleased to consider, that we are but a little above a *Year old*, though we have done so many great and glorious *Things*, and that there will be no *Necessity* (as the Law stands) of a *Dissolution* this *Year and Half*; and that no Body can imagine *Discontents* will last so long under so WISE, so UNERRING, so PACIFICK an *Administration*, as we now enjoy.

Another Reason insisted on is, That as the Continuance of this *Parliament* may prevent *Commutations at Home*, so it may hinder any *Invasion from Abroad*, by encouraging our ancient *Allies* to enter into new *Treaties* with us, which they will not otherwise do.

This is a Secret which, in my humble Opinion, ought not to have been revealed; this is an Argument highly improper to be urged in a *British Parliament*: For it supposes, that our *Allies* prescribe to our *Councils*, and that they expect we should alter the present *Frame of our Constitution*, before they will favour us with their *Friendships*; which is a Thought not to be endured in this Place, where so many Millions have been raised for their *Service*; and must move the Indignation of every *Englishman*, especially if it comes from any State that first received its *Being*, and afterwards its *Protection*, from *England*. I hope never to see this Nation brought so low, that the Crown shall be directed (as was once attempted) when to remove or keep its *Ministers*, when to dissolve or continue its *Parliaments*. Sir, His Majesty, as King of *Great Britain*, is the *Arbiter of Europe*, and may dictate to other Nations. They will, for their own sakes, court his *Friendship*: They have always found their Account in being *Allies* to the Crown he wears. The *British Treasure* and the *British Armies* have made them triumph over their *Enemies*, and established the *Ballance* they wanted. 'Tis farther said, that by this Bill you will restore the *Prerogative* to part of its Power, which is cramp'd by the *Triennial Act*. Now if this Bill is to be understood to relate to *Alliances*, it weakens and not strengthens the *Prerogative*. For it is an Insinuation, that the People have something to do in making *Treaties*, which must ever be denied by the *Friends of the Crown*, where the sole undisputed Right is lodged by the Constitution of this Kingdom. Besides, if that was any Consideration here, this Argument is also a Reflection on the present *Ministry*, who are to have the Honour to advise His Majesty in any *Alliances* he shall think fit to make: For it hath an Appearance, as if they durst not look a new *Parliament* in the Face; or, as if by some *Demerit* or other, they should not continue in their Posts (without the Help of this Bill) long enough to assist in supporting those *Alliances* when made. 'Tis true, we have had of late a sort of *Triennial Ministries*, as well as *Parliaments*. But we are to hope that the present Set of *Ministers* (who so far surpass all their Predecessors in WISDOM and VERTUE) will behave so well, as to deserve the Continuance of His Majesty's Favour, and the Kingdom's Approbation. Their *Friends* therefore ought rather to reject, than to enforce this Argument, as reflecting on them, and groundless in it self.

There is another Reason, drawn from the great and continued Expences occasioned by frequent *Elections*, which is so weak, that it scarce deserves to be taken Notice of. For every Gentleman is a Judge of his own Circumstances, whether he will, or can, be at the necessary Expences of an Election; corrupt ones are not to be supposed, especially in this House, which, all the World knows, was chosen without the least CORRUPTION, without the least VIOLENCE, without the least IMPROPER INFLUENCE whatsoever.

As to what is said, That frequent *Parliaments* are the Cause of obstructing Justice; and hinder Candidates from being impartial in the Distribution of it; 'tis equally trifling with the Reason last mentioned, and, if any, is an Argument only for making *Parliaments* perpetual. For he who will be a great deal byass'd by his Hopes of securing his Seat in a *Triennial Parliament*, will, by the same Principle, be a little warped by his Expectation of sitting in a *Septennial* one, and he ought in neither

neither Case to be a *Member of this House* : For nothing can effectually cure such a *Disposition* ; it will never be able to resist greater *Temptations*, and *Court-Preferments*.

These are the *chief Arguments* for passing *this Bill* ; and I humbly conceive they now appear to be of *no great Weight* : But the *Reasons* for letting the Law stand as it does, are such as, in my Opinion, cannot receive an Answer.

First, If there were not *abundance of other Arguments* against *this Bill*, the manner of its coming hither is a sufficient Objection to it. 'Tis sent from the *Lords*, and as it chiefly relates to our selves, I shou'd apprehend it inconsistent with our Honour to receive it. We ought to imitate the Spirit, which our *Predecessors* ever shewed in resisting all *Attempts of this kind*, all *Appearances of Innovation by the Lords*. Our *Predecessors* were so very jealous of their *Privileges*, that they never failed to exert themselves, even on the *smallest and most minute Occasions*. Shall we then ? Shall this GLORIOUS HOUSE OF COMMONS, be so far from doing that, as humbly to take a *new Model of our Constitution from Them* ? Surely we shall not sit tame, and acquiesce meanly, when They shall think fit to strike at the *Foundations of this House*.

But if Any here could be inclinable to receive the *Dictates of the Lords*, or, to speak out, the *Dictates of the Ministry* ; I humbly apprehend it is not in our Power to consent to *this Bill*. For I cannot conceive, by any Rule of Reason or Law, that we, who are only *Representatives*, can enlarge to our own Advantage the Authority delegated to us, or that by virtue of that Authority we can destroy the *Fundamental Rights of our Constituents*. I know indeed, that the Notion of the *Radical Power of the People* hath been extended to a Degree of Extravagance and Absurdity, which I wou'd never be supposed to contend for. But it is self-evident, that *this Power*, with relation to the Part we bear in the Legislature, is absolutely, is solely, in the *Electors*. You have no *Legislative Capacity*, but what you derive from them. You were chosen under the *Triennial Act*, and cou'd only be chosen for *three Years*, unless they cou'd convey more to others, than they had in themselves ; unless they cou'd give us a longer Term to represent them, then they cou'd claim at the time of their choice to be represented. Our Trust therefore is a *Triennial Trust*, and if we endeavour to continue it beyond its legal duration, from that instant we cease to be the *Trustees of the People*, and are our own *Electors* ; from that instant we act by an assumed Power, and erect a new Constitution. If we could dissolve or alter the Form of any one Part of the Legislature, why not of the whole ? And that is a *Doctrine* I presume will not be advanced here ; I am sure it will never be allowed in another Place. But I know it is a very unacceptable way of Speaking, to dispute the Power of those to whom one speaks, and it may be thought a *Presumption* if I shou'd affirm in this present Parliament (which hath given so many Proofs of its OMNIPOTENCE) that even the whole Legislature cannot do every thing. I must however always be of Opinion, that though it is a received Maxim in Civil Science, that the *supreme Legislature cannot be bound* ; yet it is an implied Exception must be understood, that it is restrained from subverting the Foundations on which it stands ; and that it ought not on any Pretence whatsoever, to touch, or alter, those Laws, which are so far admitted into the Constitution, as to become essential Parts of it. I am also of Opinion, that we cannot pass *this Bill*, because it wou'd be an Infraction of the *Act of Union*, which I hear almost every Day in this Place called an irrepealable and a fundamental Law. But since the *Representatives of North-Britain* are satisfied in that Point, it wou'd be highly impertinent in me to insist upon it.

But if nothing stood in your way, if it was never so much in your Power, I think you ought not to repeal the *Triennial Act*, except in the last Extremity, and in the most imminent Danger of the State. This Law was one of the Fruits of the Revolution. This Law restored the Freedom and Frequency of Parliaments, so far as was consistent with the Circumstances of that Reign, which was involved in a War, and had occasion for constant and heavy Taxes. This Law was a Concession made to the People by King William, in the midst of his Difficulties ; and I own the Policy of those Ministers, who shall advise his Majesty to give his Royal Assent to the Repealing of it, is of too refined and delicate a Nature for my Understanding. For since his Majesty hath been pleased to propose that Prince as a Pattern to himself, and is pursuing his Steps with so much Glory, it will be Matter of Astonishment to those who are not in the Secret of Affairs, to see, that in the Reign of the one King every Thing shou'd be done to enlarge the Liberties of the People, and to restrain his Successors from being capable of relapsing into the Errors and Abuses of former Princes ; and that in the Reign of the other, there should be the least Appearance of doing any thing which might but seem to stretch the Prerogative, to invade and shock the Rights and Privileges of the Subject, when both shall be found to Rule by the same Principles of Liberty, and by the same Maxims of Government.

The Triennial Act is grounded on the ancient Usage and Constitution of Parliaments; as it is intended to oblige the Crown to call them frequently. For, that Parliaments were held frequently (half Yearly or Annually at least) appears not only from the best Accounts we have of the first Institution of them, and by the Two Acts of Edward the Third, but by the Writs of Summons still extant, and by several Authentick Instruments and Records. However satisfactory it might be on any other Occasion, I am sensible, that a Deduction of the History of ancient Parliaments, as they were successively called, wou'd be very tedious and unentertaining in this Debate; and I will therefore only mention Two Records. One is that famous Instrument of Edward the First, concerning the annuus Census, then claimed by the Popes from the Crown of England; wherein he takes notice, that some Arrears, incurred on that Head, had not been raised, as they ought to have been in *Parlamento quod circa Octavas Resurrectionis Dominica celebrari in Anglia consuevit*. But he promises that he would recommend the Payment of the Money due, in alio Parlamento nostro quod ad finem Sancti Michaelis proxime futuri intendimus dante Domino celebrare. The other Record is a Representation from the Parliament to Richard the Second. Some Passages of which are these—*Quod ex antiquo Statuto habent, & consuetudine laudabili & approbata ejus contrarietati dici non volebit*. That the King is to call *Dominos & Procures regni atq; communes semel in anno ad Parlamentum suum tanquam ad summam curiam totius regni*. That if the King—a Parlamento suo se alienaverit sua sponte non aliqua infirmitate aut aliqua alia de causa necessitatis sed per immoderatam voluntatem proterve se subtraxerit per absentiam temporis quadraginta dierum tanquam de vexatione Populi sui & gravibus expensis eorum non curans ex tunc licitum omnibus & singulis eorum absque domigenio Regis redire ad propria & unicuique eorum in Patriam suam remeare.

From the former of these Records, 'tis obvious to observe, that Edward the First (who was one of our best Princes, and so great a Preserver of the Laws of his Kingdom, that he is justly called by our Historians the English Justinian) chose rather than to prolong the sitting of his Parliaments beyond their usual time to dissolve one, tho' it had not finished its necessary Business, and to summon another within the space of a few Months.

From the other 'tis very remarkable, that Richard the Second (who is said to be one of the worst Kings that ever sat on the Throne of England) by absenting himself from the Business of Parliaments, and by that means continuing their Sessions beyond their proper and accustomed time drew upon himself a sharp Reprimand from both Houses, and was at last, for such Practices, amongst other Things, deposed.

Many Reigns after this Henry the Eighth accomplished what Richard the Second only attempted, and he continued his last Parliament ad libitum without Reproof. But 'tis well known, what exorbitant Powers they vested him with, and God forbid we shou'd have any Resemblance of those Times; for that Parliament acted like Slaves, and that King acted like a Tyrant.

But if the Triennial Law had not been grounded on the Reasons of Antiquity, and the original Usage of Parliaments; it was no more than a reasonable Indulgence from the Throne to the People, who had struggled for the Revolution, on Account of the Abuses of Parliaments, and the Endeavours to render them Insignificant. 'Tis true, that Prince once denied his Royal Assent to it: But he afterwards considered, that it could be no Diminution of his Prerogative, no Blemish to his Regal Power, to retrieve the Honour and Dignity of Parliaments, as they were his Support, as they were the Essential Part of that Constitution he came to save; and this he found he cou'd only do by the frequent calling of them.

Besides, this Law was not only a reasonable Indulgence to the People, as hath been said, in that it gave them frequent Opportunities of changing their Members, when they did not approve their Behaviour, and was of Advantage to the Publick, in making them act with more than ordinary Caution and Circumspection: But it proved of great Service to the Crown. For by frequent Parliaments the Crown cou'd only know the immediate Sense of the Nation, which is absolutely necessary for a Prince to know on all great Emergencies. However inconvenient this Law may now be thought to the Crown; and however opposite to some Projects and Schemes an active Ministry may have in view, I appeal to experienced Members, whether they think, or can imagine, that the Crown cou'd have got half the Money it hath been supply'd with since the Revolution, but by new and fresh Elections. Such grievous and perpetual Taxes wou'd never have been endured from a stale and continued Parliament. There is no Injury or Dishonour therefore to the Crown, to be obliged by a Law, to do what is Justice to the Subject, and Convenience to itself, it ought to do without a Law.

But if you had a Power to *repeal this Law*, and exercise that Power, the People would be in a much worse Condition, than if it had never been granted to them. They would be bound up for ever in a *Legislative Way*, the only Way effectually and irrecoverably to lose their Liberties. They would, by us (*their Representatives*) condemn short and frequent Parliaments, and establish long and Pension'd ones, which is a new Doctrine, and such as was never before advanced by the Commons of Great-Britain.

Surely there must be some *secret Cause*, some *latent Reason* for hurrying on this Bill in so precipitate a manner. The true Reason, I believe, is not declared; and for my Part, I cannot but suspect, that the Ministry have some Thing to do which they apprehend will not be acceptable to a new Parliament, and which will not stand the Test of the Nation. I say, it must be something they have to do. For I am confident they do not Self-condemn themselves, for what they have already done. They have no remorse of Conscience for apprehending so many hundred Gentlemen, and confining them in Prison so many Months without Examination. For such Confinements were not only necessary to suppress the Rebellion, but we have been told were intended as a Favour and Kindness to the Persons who were so confined. It must therefore be some new Work they have upon their Hands; what that Work is, I will not presume to guess. But I will presume to say, what it cannot be. It cannot be a Design to abolish the Limitations of the Act of Settlement, with Relation to Foreigners; because that is no less than an open violation of our new Magna Charta, and an entire Infraction of our Original Contract, as the Government now stands.

I fear I have quite wearied your Patience, but the Importance of the Subject will in some Measure excuse me, and I have but a very few Words now to add. I hope you will reject and not commit this Bill. For there is nothing more certain, than that it will be to your Dishonour and Disservice to pass it, if we may reason of what will be, by what hath been. Long Parliaments then will naturally grow either formidable or contemptible.

We have an instance of the one in the long Parliament of King Charles the First, which to its eternal Infamy overturned the best Constitution in the World, the Church and Monarchy of this Nation.

We have a Proof of the other in the long Parliament of King Charles the Second. I ask Pardon if I am heard by any that were Members of it, but I only repeat what others have said. There was a famous Simile applied by Julian Johnson to this Parliament, which I the rather mention, because it was much applauded by the Patrons of Liberty, and Lovers of Parliaments; and because I know the Author is esteemed above his Deserts by some Gentlemen, who are now debating for long Parliaments. 'Tis this, That a standing Parliament will always stagnate, and be like a Country-Pond which is overgrown with Ducks-meat.

I make no Application; no Man will, or can, with any Colour of Truth or Reason apply it to this Parliament. This Parliament is so far from being a stagnating Pool, that it might rather be compared to a rapid Stream, or an irresistible Torrent, which, if continued, will bear down all before it.

Mr. Speaker,

I May venture to affirm, that the Bill now before you is of higher Concern to the Commons of Great Britain, than any that ever yet was before you. It takes away the Peoples Right of appointing their Representatives; It deprives them of their Share in the Legislature, and, in my Opinion, wounds the Constitution of Parliaments very deep.

No Gentleman is ignorant, that the Frame of our Government is made up of the King, the Lords, and the Commons. These, with respect to each other, have ever been esteem'd separate, although (when put together) they make but one entire Government. The Duration of this Form of Government in England, longer than in our neighbouring Countries, is manifestly owing to the Care taken by those that went before us, in keeping these Three constituent Parts of the Political Body up to the Rules of their first Institution, by restraining each to its proper Bounds, and in not

suffering one to be overborn or swallow'd up by the other Two: However these Three great Parts may in other respects be consider'd, yet with regard to the Legislative they must act in conjunction. The Assent of each to the making of Laws is essentially necessary; but the Manner of giving this Assent is different in the People from what it is in the King and in the Lords. The People, by reason of their Number, cannot be personally present at the Passing of Laws; their Assent can no otherwise be signified than by their Representatives. The Disadvantage the Commons are, in this respect, under, is in some sort made up to them by the Care taken in the framing of our Government, That they should be truly and fairly represented.

That Elections shall be Free is often declar'd in our Written Laws. 'Tis in effect saying, That neither the Power of the Crown, nor the Power of the Lords, should interpose in them.

The Resolution of this House renew'd every Session (that for a Lord to concern himself in the Election of Members to serve for the Commons in Parliament, is a high Infringement of the Liberties and Privileges of the Commons of Great Britain) sufficiently shews the Jealousie the Commons ever had of the Lords intermeddling in the Elections of their Representatives.

The Attempts made on the King's Part towards influencing Elections have been principally by Officers under the Nomination of the Crown. As this Mischief from time to time appear'd, Laws were introduced providing against it. The Statute 7 H. 4. c. 15. recites, 'That Law to be made at the grievous Complaint of the Commons of the Undue Elections for Parliament, and directs (among other Things) that Sheriffs should proceed to Elections freely and indifferently, NOTWITHSTANDING ANY COMMAND TO THE CONTRARY.' Many subsequent Laws were made for preserving to the People this Privilege (on which all other depend) of being faithfully represented in Parliament. No less than Seven Acts were made in K. William's Time for that Purpose: So greatly did the Endeavours of Officers, to influence Elections at that Time, abound. The Statute of 3 W. & M. c. 1. takes notice, That the Officers of the Excise, by reason of the Greatness of the Duty, and the extraordinary Powers given to them, had frequently, by Threats or Promises, so far prevailed on Electors, that they had been absolutely debar'd of the Freedom of giving their Votes, which, according to the known Constitution of this Kingdom, every Person ought to have and enjoy. It then enacts, 'That any such Officer who persuades or dissuades any Elector from giving his Vote, shall forfeit One Hundred Pounds, and be incapable of executing any Office relating to the Excise.' Another Law of the like Nature was lately made in relation to the Officers concern'd in collecting the Post-Office Duty. These Laws are now all to be laid asleep; Provisions made for protecting the People's Right of Election must become insignificant, if Elections themselves are no longer to be allow'd.

The Care taken by the Founders of our Government to preserve this Right did not stop here; it was not sufficient to that Purpose that Elections should be Free; it was likewise necessary that they should be Frequent.

The People's Right to frequent Elections was founded on substantial Reason; for since They (who could act no otherwise than by Representatives) were capable of being mistaken in their Choice, and the Person chosen liable to be tempted over to a Dependance on the Crown, or on the Lords, and thereby receive an undue Influence, it became necessary, that frequent Opportunities should be given to the Commons to correct their Choice, and thereby prevent the Danger which the Unfaithfulness of their Representatives might otherwise bring upon them.

That the People had a Right to Frequent Elections is made unquestionable by the best of Evidence, PERPETUAL USAGE.

From the first Footsteps of Parliaments down, to the Time of Henry the Eighth, not only from Records, but from the printed Statutes, the Frequency of Elections does appear. The most repeated Instances within that Period of Time, are of Parliaments determining within the Compass of a Year; no Instance where they continued longer than Three.

King Charles the First (that unfortunate Prince) was put upon Governing without Parliaments; but the Necessity of Affairs forcing him to change his Purpose, a Parliament was called in the Sixteenth Year of His Reign, in which a Law of an extraordinary Nature was pass'd, viz.

'That in case the King did not call a Parliament within Three Years after the Determination of the precedent Parliament, then the Lord Chancellor, &c. should issue Writs for that purpose; with many other extraordinary Provisions.' That Parliament soon after perpetuated themselves (so far as it was capable of being done;) and by an Act made the

the same Year, They were not to be dissolved but by Act of Parliament: To the long Continuance of which Parliament were all the Calamities of the Civil War to be imputed.

This Statute of the 16th of Charles the First was repealed by the Statute of the 16th of Charles 2. c. 1. But notwithstanding the fond Humour the Nation was then in, even by the same Act it was declared, 'That by the Laws of this Realm, Parliaments are to be held very often; and to the end there might be a frequent CALLING, Assembling and Holding Parliaments once in Three Years at least, it was declared and enacted, That Parliaments should not be intermitted above Three Years at most.

In King Charles the Second's Time another Turn of Policy was taken, which was to bring the House of Commons to the Bent of the Ministry, by the secret Application of Pensions to the Members. Such was the Modesty even of that Age, as not openly and avowedly to byass with Offices, those, who ought at least to be the faithful Representatives of the People.

For the effecting of this pernicious Purpose of corrupting the Commons, it was necessary that the Parliament should be prolonged (which it was for Eighteen Years) Assurance of which being privately given to many of the Members, and there being Time sufficient to gain upon others (not so far intrusted with the Secret) the Design was effected. And such was the Behaviour of that Parliament, that it acquired the infamous Name of the Pensioner-Parliament.

The Attack thus made on the Constitution of Parliaments, by depriving the People of their Right of frequent Elections, gave Birth to the Jealousie the Nation entertained, of the Intention that Prince had of assuming to himself a despotick Power. How uneasy the latter Part of his Reign became on that Account, is well known; and the Nation has felt the Effect of the Ferment, and Divisions which then arose, and by the Artifice of ill designing Ministers have been ever since continued.

The People being warned by the narrow Escape their Liberties met with from that Parliament, did (after much Struggle) obtain this Law of Triennial Parliaments, the only Remedy left for preserving their ancient Constitution.

And now, after above a HUNDRED MILLIONS given by the People in order to preserve their old Form of Government, here is a Bill sent us by the Lords, which, if it passes, must expose us again to the greatest of Dangers, which is that of a long Parliament.

In the Time of that Pensioner-Parliament (which began in 1662.) the Means of Temptation in the Ministry's Hands were not so great as they now are: The Civil List is well nigh double to what it then was. The Dependance on the Crown is greatly enlarged, by reason of the Increase of Officers for managing the Publick Revenue and Funds. What Influence these may have upon an exhausted Nation, under the Terror which Forty Thousand Regular Troops carry with them, is easily foreseen.

No Wonder the Lords (who are ever fond of Power) have sent us a Bill, which admits of their having a Share in the Nomination of the House of Commons: But I can't guess what should induce them to expect our Concurrence. Surely they cannot think so meanly of us, that for the sake of continuing our Seats here, we should give into what so greatly affects the Rights of Those that sent us: Can we be thought so ungrateful, as to joyn in the Destruction of the Power that raised us? Can they think us so unfaithful, as to betray our Trust in this gross manner, by renouncing our Relation to the People, and accepting from the Crown, and from themselves, a Renewal of our Right to sit here? Should they imagine us no longer to be influenced by the Rules of Justice and Morality; yet methinks they should allow us to have some Sense of Shame remaining, which must give us Pain when We return into our Countries, and look those in the Face whom we have so greatly injured.

I wou'd take Notice of a Matter that was mentioned in the Debate, (supposing this Bill should undergo the Forms used in the passing of Bills) whether it would carry with it the Obligation of a Law? Of this I own my self much in doubt.

The Powers we are intrusted with, as Representatives of the People, appear in the Form of a Writ for summoning the Parliament. And in the Indentures annexed to the Return, the Writ recites: 'Whereas we have thought fit to call a Parliament, touching divers urgent Affairs, concerning Us, the State, and Defence of our Kingdom of Great-Britain. It then requires, That the Sheriff do cause Two to be Elected Knights, &c. to act in, and consent, to what shall be ordained by the Common Council of Great-Britain, super negotiis antedictis.

The

The Indenture annex'd to the Return answers the Writ, *viz.* That they have elect-
 ed such and such to attend according to the Tenor of the Writ, and given them full
 Powers to act in and consent to all Things in the said Parliament, which shall be by Com-
 mon Council, and Consent ordain'd, touching the State and Defence of His Majesty's King-
 dom of Great Britain. The Question then is, Whether the Authority thus given us to
 act, touching the Defence of the Government, does enable us to lay aside One of the
 Three Great Estates (the People) by denying them their Right of acting by their Representa-
 tives in Parliament, and consequently their Share in the Legislature? Does the Power
 put into our Hands by the People justify our turning the Dagger
 into the Bowels of the Constitution? This Doubt is increased by the
 Notion that prevailed touching the Invalidity of the Statute of the
 16th Car. 1. c. 7. whereby that Parliament was not to be dissolv'd
 but by an Act of Parliament. No Act of Parliament was ever
 made for that purpose, which would certainly have been done, had
 the subsequent Parliament thought, that a Law made in diminution
 of the People's Interest in the Legislature had been valid.

By an Act of the Conven-
 tion that met in April 1660
 the Long Parliament that met
 in 1640 was declared to be
 dissolv'd: But that Act was
 not confirm'd by Parliament, and
 most of the other Acts of that
 Convention were by the Stat. of
 the 13th C. 2. c. 7.

I should be very willing to hear answered what a worthy Member (who just now spoke
 for committing the Bill, and own'd his Sentiments alter'd touching the Triennial Act)
 has told the World in an excellent Treatise of his, *† That no People can give away* ^{+ Preface to}
the Freedom of themselves and their Posterity: That such a Donation ought to be esteemed of ^{the History of}
no greater Validity than the Gift of a Child, or of a Madman: That People can no more ^{Denmark.}
part with their legal Liberties, than Kings can alienate their Crowns.

Every Body is sensible, that the publick Occasions will require large Supplies; and
 should so much as a Doubt arise in Mens Minds touching the Legality of the Taxes, it
 will tend to increase the general Dissatisfaction (so often mentioned in this Debate)
 and subject us to a Hazard there is no Occasion to run, did we content our selves
 with proceeding in the common Methods, which the Usage of many Ages does justify.
 So concluded against committing the Bill.

Die Sabbati 14^o Aprilis, 1716.

Hodie secunda vice lecta est Billa, Entit. *An Act for enlarging the Time*
of Continuance of Parliaments, appointed by an Act made in the Sixth Year
of the Reign of King William and Queen Mary, entituled, An Act for
the frequent Meeting and Calling of Parliaments.

AND it being propos'd to commit the Bill, after long Debate thereupon,
 The Question was put whether the said Bill shall be committed? It was Re-
 solved in the Affirmative.

Dissentient.

I. Because we conceive that frequent and new Parliaments are required by the
 Fundamental Constitution of the Kingdom, and the Practice thereof for many Ages
 (which manifestly appears by our Records) is a sufficient Evidence and Proof of this
 Constitution.

II. Because it is agreed, that the House of Commons must be chosen by the Peo-
 ple, and when so chosen they are truly the Representatives of the People, which
 they can't be so properly said to be, when continued for a longer time than that
 for which they were chosen; for after that time they are chosen by the Parliament
 and not the People, who are thereby deprived of the only Remedy which they have
 against those who either do not understand, or through Corruption do wilfully be-
 tray the Trust reposed in them; which Remedy is to choose better Men in their
 Places.

III. Because the Reasons given for this Bill, We conceive were not sufficient to
 Induce us to pass it, in Subversion of so essential a Part of our Constitution.

1. For as to the Argument that this will encourage the Princes and States of
 Europe to enter into Alliances with us, We have not heard any one Minister assert
 that any one Prince or State has ask'd, or so much as insinuated, that they wished
 such an Alteration.

Nor is it reasonable to imagine it; for it cannot be expected that any Prince or
 State, can rely upon a People to defend their Liberties and Interests, who shall be
 thought to have given up so great a Part of their own; nor can it be prudent for
 them

‘ them to wish such an Experiment, after the experience that *Europe* has had of the
 ‘ great Things this Nation has done for them under the Constitution, which is to
 ‘ be altered by this Bill.

‘ But on the other Hand they may be deterred from entering into Measures with
 ‘ us, when they shall be informed by the Preamble of this Bill, that the *Popish Fa-*
 ‘ ction is so dangerous, as that it may be destructive to the Peace and Security of the
 ‘ Government; and may apprehend from this Bill, that the Government is so weak, as
 ‘ to want so extraordinary a Provision for its Safety, which seems to imply that the
 ‘ Gentlemen of *Britain* are not to be trusted or relied upon, and that the good Affections
 ‘ of the People are restrained to so small a Number as that, of which the Present
 ‘ House of Commons consists.

‘ 2. We conceive this Bill is so far from preventing Expences and Corruptions, that
 ‘ it will rather encrease them, for the longer a Parliament is to last the more valuable
 ‘ to be Purchased is a Station in it, and the greater also is the Danger of Corrupting
 ‘ the Members of it: For if there should be a Ministry who shall want a Par-
 ‘ liament to Screen them from the just Resentment of the People, or from a Disco-
 ‘ very of their ill Practices to the King, who can’t otherwise, or so truly be informed
 ‘ of them, as by a free Parliament, it is so much the Interest of such a Ministry, to
 ‘ influence the Elections (which by their Authority and the Disposal of the Publick
 ‘ Money, they of all others have the best Means of doing) that ’tis to be feared they
 ‘ will be tempted, and not fail to make use of them. And even when the Members are
 ‘ chosen, they have a greater Opportunity of inducing very many to comply with
 ‘ them, than they could have, if not only the Sessions of Parliament, but the Parlia-
 ‘ ment it self were reduced to the Ancient and Primitive Constitution, and Practice
 ‘ of frequent and new Parliaments; for as a good Ministry will neither practise nor need
 ‘ Corruption, so it cannot be any Lord’s Intent, to provide for the Security of a bad
 ‘ One.

‘ 3. We conceive that whatever Reasons may induce the Lords to pass this Bill, to
 ‘ continue this Parliament for Seven Years, will be at least as Strong, and may, by the
 ‘ Conduct of the Ministry, be made much stronger before the end of Seven Years, for
 ‘ continuing it still longer, and even to perpetuate it, which would be an express and
 ‘ absolute Subversion of the Third Branch of the *British* Government.

*Somerset, Shrewsbury, Anglesey, Osborne, Compton, Bristol, Tadcaster, Nottingham, Abingdon,
 Guilford, Aylesford, Foley, Ashburnham, Mansel, Gower, Bathurst, Weston, Bruce,
 Willoughby de Broke, Powlet, Dartmouth, Bingley, Strafford, Trevor, Montjoy, Nor-
 thampton, Salisbury. Fr. Roffen, P. Hereford, Fr. Cestriens.*



F I N I S.